



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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Contact: Jason Kelly (360) 902-1815

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

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Yakima County horse falls victim to West Nile

OLYMPIA – West Nile virus (WNV), a potentially fatal disease in equines, has been confirmed in a Yakima County horse. The two-year-old gelding has been euthanized.

The horse, which was pastured near Grandview, had no history of travel out of the area and was not vaccinated for WNV. The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Pullman reported the positive test results to the State Veterinarian's Office.

WNV is spread by mosquitoes that have fed on an infected bird. The disease can sicken people, horses, many types of birds, and other animals. It is not spread from horses to other animals.

No human cases of WNV have been confirmed in Washington in 2012. According to [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov), 1118 human cases have been reported in 38 states this year.

WNV is fatal in about one-third of all horses that show clinical signs, although most horses do not become ill and show no symptoms at all. Those that do become ill display loss of coordination, loss of appetite, confusion, fever, stiffness, and muscle weakness, particularly in the hindquarters.

Washington led the nation with 72 WNV cases in horses in 2009, but no cases were detected in Washington horses in the past two years. Washington's state veterinarian continues to urge owners to vaccinate their horses against the disease.

Veterinarians who learn of potential WNV cases in horses or other animals should contact the State Veterinarian's Office at (360) 902-1881.

Additional information on WNV can be found at the [state Department of Health](http://www.wa.gov) and at the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](http://www.wa.gov).

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